

First, my bill will allow employees who are offered severance pay packages by their employers to exclude the first \$15,000 from their taxable income. No longer will the Tax Code punish displaced workers by taxing their misfortune. This income exclusion could be taken by the employee regardless of whether the reduction in force was voluntary or involuntary.

In addition, if an employer's severance benefit provides for payments for up to 3 years from the date of separation, my legislation would allow the employee the flexibility to elect to exclude all or some of the severance payment from their income for the 3 year period, up to the \$15,000 limit.

Second, the legislation will provide a \$2,000 refundable tax credit for retraining expenses incurred after a lay-off. This tax credit is in keeping with the common-sense principle that families and individuals know their retraining needs better than government-run retraining programs.

To ensure that this tax relief is available to middle class families, jointly filing couples with incomes of up to \$100,000, and single persons with incomes up to \$75,000, would qualify under my legislation for the full \$2,000 tax credit. The value of the credit is gradually phased out for persons earning higher amounts.

While I believe Congress should continue to reform and reduce red-tape in our Nation's patch-work of retraining programs, it is important to protect workers from slipping through the cracks of these programs' widely varying eligibility criteria.

This legislation will go a long way toward improving the efficiency of our Nation's labor markets, and I call on Members on both sides of the aisle to lend their support for this effort. Severance payments are designed to provide a financial cushion to help pad the blow of a work force reduction. When the Tax Code adds insult to injury by subjecting these families to a higher tax liability, it is clearly time to correct this insidious consequence.

TRIBUTE TO DELORES BACON-FINCH

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Delores Bacon-Finch. Delores has been a dutiful employee for the New York Police Department as a police administrative aide.

During her professional career Delores has performed a number of duties. In 1985 she was assigned to the community affairs community meetings with the community council, the youth council, block associations, churches, and local development corporations.

A dedicated community activists, Ms. Bacon-Finch feeds the homeless, assists senior citizens, works with the Kiwanis Club, struggles to curb gun violence and drug trafficking. Delores even finds the time to visit hospital patients. The efforts of Delores Bacon-Finch are noteworthy and deserving of recognition. I am pleased to introduce her to my House colleagues.

REAUTHORIZATION OF EX-IM BANK

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my support for reauthorizing the U.S. Export-Import Bank. By providing loans and guarantees that may otherwise be unavailable, the Ex-Im Bank is an invaluable tool to American workers and businesses, 80 percent of which are small companies.

In my home State of Illinois, 288 companies and 125 communities have benefited from the Ex-Im Bank in the last 5 years. During this time, Ex-Im financing helped to support the \$2.2 billion in exports my State produces, and the estimated 30,000 jobs that manufacture those exports.

The Bank is essential to the communities, constituents, and businesses in my district. Whether it's in Elgin or Aurora, Batavia, or West Chicago, companies and their employees are benefiting.

I wish to thank my friend from New Jersey, Representative ROBERT MENENDEZ, for joining me in making this a priority. I'm delighted that the chief deputy whips from each side of the aisle can come together in making this a bipartisan effort.

TRIBUTE TO NICOLE S. SUARD

HON. FRANK RIGGS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the activities of Nicole S. Suard, who has made a tremendous contribution to Napa County, CA, which I represent. Today, "Nicky" is being presented with 1 of 20 Regional Role Model Awards in the 1997 Life Saves "Take a Bigger Role" awards program.

Nicky Suard sees a need and comes up with a solution. Seeing a need for a home for unwed teenage mothers, she recruited a group of people and established Choix de Vie—Choice for Life—which recently celebrated the birth of its 100th baby.

For years, there has been a shortage of activities for teenagers in Napa. In 1996, Nicky arranged for a building to be donated, recruited volunteers, and founded the Lytehouse, Napa Valley's teen center.

Knowing that many nonprofits in Napa County did not have the expertise or ability to prepare grant requests, Nicky Suard brought together a group of leaders from the community to establish the Community Foundation of Napa Valley. The Community Foundation's goal is to be an aggregate of permanent fund raising for the benefit of the Napa Valley through wills, trusts, and estate planning. All moneys distributed to go local nonprofit organizations. Ms. Suard also donates her legal services as the incorporating attorney for many local nonprofits.

As if all of this is not enough, Nicky Suard is as dedicated mother of two children, Tyler and Corey. She also volunteers as a parent-teacher at their schools, teaching crafts. In all of this whirlwind of activity, she is supported

and helped by her husband, Dr. Thomas Suard.

I have personally seen the results of Nicky Suard's efforts and have been impressed time and again with her hard work and commitment to the well-being of all people in the Napa community. Her vision, innovation, and accomplishments should be held up as a model for others.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2264) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Goodling amendment. While I believe that we should have national standards and expectations for all of our students, I do not believe these national tests will help us achieve that goal.

We cannot establish nationwide standards for our students if we fail to include all students in these national tests.

The fact is that too many students will be unable to participate in the President's proposed reading and math tests.

While I commend the administration's efforts to improve public education, I remained concerned that the proposed reading test will exclude too many children from the educational opportunity they deserve.

Limited English proficient students make up a significant percentage of kids in our Nation's classrooms. Unfortunately, the administration will not adequately accommodate the participation of these students.

We have tried to attain a compromise for LEP students, but the administration has failed to offer a comparable solution.

The administration says that it wants accountability from our schools. But who will account for the progress of children who cannot take these tests?

I believe that many more school districts will be affected than people realize.

Orange County, CA, for example, has long been considered an affluent, homogeneous area. My hometown, however, has rapidly changed over the years. The truth is, Orange County is now more diverse than ever, with many new Americans calling it home.

And Orange County schools have changed along with our demographics.

Currently, 30 percent of all Orange County students are limited English proficient. My congressional district is one of the better examples of how these tests cannot adequately assess all public schools and their kids.

Two out of four school districts in my congressional district will have over half of their students excluded from the reading test because of their large number of limited English proficient students.